



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

**I. Meeting Opened**

The March 12, 2019 Regular Council Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Mayor Russ Barley. The meeting was held in City Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council Members present: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilwoman Amanda Green, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner and Councilman William “Boots” McCormick.

Staff present: City Clerk Rebecca Podraza, Assistant Clerk Lori Cox, City Attorney Clayton Adkinson, City Planner Latilda Hughes-Neel, Parks Director Charlie Simmons, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, Lead Sewer Operator Bridget Hilgenberg, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, Finance Assistant Joyce Sunday, and City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau.

**II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

The invocation was given by Councilwoman Haffner, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**III. Recognition of Guests: None**

**IV. Public Comment on Consent Agenda: None**

**V. Approval of Consent Agenda**

1. Bills Paid
2. Council Workshop February 27, 2019
3. Regular Council Meeting February 28, 2019

*Council Action: Councilwoman Green made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried*

**VI. Consideration of Additions/Revisions to Agenda**

**Additions**

1. Clerk – Exempt/Non-Exempt Status of Administrative Assistants
2. Parks – Splash Pad Grand Opening
3. Water – Employee Certification Approval

**Revisions**

1. Councilwoman Haffner - Move Reclaim System Update to Sewer Department

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

**VII. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletion**

*Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to approve the Agenda with specified Additions and Revision as presented. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

**VIII. Staff Reports**

**A. Engineering**

1. 2019 SCOP Application – Blue Ridge Parkway Improvements
  - Engineer Rouchaleau presented the lane addition renderings of Blue Ridge Parkway for submitting the grant application for the Small City Outreach Program (SCOP).
  - Councilwoman Brannon suggested working with the County to see if they will help with the project.
  - Rouchaleau will check on the cost of water and sewer upgrades which may be able to be done in-house.
  - Councilwoman Green advised that DOT indicated SCOP may not be approving funding for turn lanes.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon made a motion to approve submittal of application to the Small City Outreach Program for Blue Ridge Parkway Improvements. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

**B. Water**

1. Request approval for employee certifications
  - Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle requested the approval for the cost of certification exams for Gary Thomas and Kyle McCullough for their Water Operator License. The cost would be one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per employee.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner made a motion to approve the cost of Water Operator License Exams for a total of two hundred dollars (\$200.00,) for Maintenance Workers Gary Thomas and Kyle McCullough. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

**C. Sewer**

1. Reclaim System Update
  - Sewer Lead Operator Bridget Hilgenberg advised the Council that Staff held a meeting with Engineering and Hammock Bay representatives regarding the Re-use system.

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

- Three options were presented for Council to decide on what to do about bringing the reclaim system into operation.
  - a. Leave everything as is until new plant is in operation
  - b. Belt Press the digested sludge as needed
  - c. Approve the Dewberry Scope of Work to provide professional services to do a WWTP Optimization Study
- The other problem that needs to be addressed is that with all the new development coming into Hammock Bay, the plant may reach capacity within two years.
- Finance Officer Bowers advised that the Sewer Impact Fee account has over two million dollars. Attorney Adkinson requested that Dewberry provide a letter of certification that Impact Fees may be used for the plant to ensure optimization of increased capacity.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon made a motion to approve the Dewberry Proposal to perform an Optimization Study in the amount of \$19,720.00 of the existing facility to determine the best plan of action regarding capacity and reuse. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

**D. Parks**

1. Recreation Aide to Recreation Assistant Recommendation
  - Parks Director Simmons requested to reclassify Travis Digges and Daniel Fliehman from Recreation Aide to Recreation Assistant. They have both had their performance evaluations and received very high marks. Director Simmons recommends they be reclassified and given an increase from \$12.03 to \$14.00 per hour. The Finance officer has verified that the Parks Department has the funds to provide for the increases.

*Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to approve the recommendation to reclassify the Recreation Aide positions to Recreation Assistant Positions and to increase Travis Digges and Daniel Fliehman from \$12.03 per hour to \$14.00 per hour. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

2. Splash Pad Grand Opening

- Parks Director Charlie Simmons requested that the Council set a date for the grand opening of the new Sports Complex Splash Pad.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Green made a motion to approve Saturday, May 4, 2019 for the Grand Opening of the Splash Pad. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

**E. Billing**

**1. New Policy/Procedure Clarification**

- Manager Roberts is currently working on policies and procedures and requested direction from the Council on what they would like to see. One of the policies being developed is a collections policy.
- Councilwoman Green advised that she has an item on the agenda regarding Standard Operating Procedures and believes this is an appropriate time to address that. All departments need to develop Standard Operating Procedures for their departments.
- Per Clayton Adkinson, those procedures need to be approved by Council.
- Manager Roberts addressed the Council with the current process of the contracted collection agency that the City uses. Roberts recommended that the City develop a policy requiring the collection agency to invoice the fees they deduct from the amount they collect. Council concurs and staff will move forward with developing the policy.
- Staff and Council discussed developing a policy regarding the requirement of payment during a high bill dispute. Council concurs that standard operating procedure should be documented that the customer needs to pay their bill during the consideration of the high bill dispute, and if it is found that the City is at fault, a credit will be issued.

**2. Billing Department Updates**

- Utility Billing Manager Debbie Roberts addressed the Council regarding the cost to mail announcements to the public, informing them of the updated Disconnect Policy and request for customer updated account information.
- Council discussion ensued regarding prices for mailing out the announcements.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon made a motion to approve two inserts to be included in the next bill at a cost of \$950.00, on colored paper, to inform customers of the new Disconnect Policy and to request updated customer contact information. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

- Mr. David Polk approached the podium and addressed the Council regarding the new Disconnect Policy and the problems he had with the implementation.

**F. City Clerk Matters**

**1. Evaluation Forms Approval**

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon made a motion to approve the Department Head and Employee Evaluation forms and Supplemental Documents as approved to form by the Labor*

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

*Attorney Coppins & Monroe. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

2. Job Descriptions Approval

*Council Action: Councilman Farris made a motion to approve the job descriptions as developed and formatted by Quest Management Consultants, Inc. Councilman McCormick seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

3. Merit Raise Determination Table

*Council Action: Councilman McCormick made a motion to approve the Merit Raise Determination Table as presented. Councilman Farris seconded the motion.*

Council discussion ensued and agreed to wait until closer to budget time to revisit the Merit Raise Determination Table.

*Councilman McCormick withdrew his motion on the condition that merit raises continue to be on the table for a later time; Councilman Farris withdrew his second.*

5. Exempt & Non-Exempt Status

- Clerk Podraza was directed by Council to have this item on the agenda at the Human Resources Workshop held on March 7, 2019. Council discussion ensued regarding the salary exempt status of the administrative assistant positions, to include the Assistant Clerk Lori Cox and the Finance Assistant Joyce Sunday.
- Councilwoman Haffner suggested that the assistant positions be changed to exempt status but to continue to track their time on a timecard. Councilwoman Green concurred.
- Finance Officer Bowers asked if tracking of time would be required of all exempt status employees. Councilwoman Haffner indicated it is common practice for assistant positions to track their time.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Green made a motion to change both the Assistant Clerk, Lori Cox and the Finance Assistant, Joyce Sunday to exempt status but would still be required to keep a timecard. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

6. Clerk Podraza announced that Buz Eddy with the Florida League of Cities Senior Advisory Program will be available for Council to call him anytime on Friday March 15<sup>th</sup>

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall

March 12, 2019 Minutes

or Monday March 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss the City Manager Job Description content.

**G. Planning & Zoning Dept**

1. City Planning Director Hughes-Neel updated the Council on the following:
  - Status of the Grandfathered Impact Fee Developers Letters
  - Bear Creek
  - Owls Head Phase I
  - Annexation Workshop Reminder on March 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM

**IX. Old Business**

**A. Disconnection Policy**

- Clerk Podraza presented Resolution No. 2019-03, Disconnection Policy. Council discussion ensued regarding the new policy. Staff advised that the average customer bill is \$37.47 a month.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner made a motion to amend Resolution 2019-03, page 2, section 3, for approval at the next Council Meeting, to change the non-pay cut-off amount from ten dollars (\$10.00) to thirty dollars (\$30.00). Councilwoman Green seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

**B. Hourly Rate Increase recommendations**

- The hourly rate recommendations were presented for the following positions:
  - Meter Reader - \$14.00
  - Billing/CSR - \$14.00
  - Water Maintenance Worker 1 - \$14.00
  - Reader & NB Maintenance Worker 1 - \$14.00
  - Sewer Maintenance Tech - \$15.00
  - Sewer Operator Assistant - \$16.00
- The Water Department has the budget funds to cover the two Water Maintenance Worker increases and the unused City Manager funds can be utilized for the rest of the positions.
- Council discussion ensued.

*Councilman Farris made a motion to approve the hourly rate increase recommendations as presented, with an effective date of March 18, 2019. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. Four ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Haffner, McCormick); one nay (Green); motion carried.*

**C. Strategic Plan - Career Development Tier Plan Discussion**

- Clerk Podraza advised that this was suggested to be put on the agenda at the Human

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).





**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

Resource Workshop on March 7, 2019. The Career Development of department positions should be addressed in the Strategic Plan.

- Podraza advised it is hard pressed for staff to work on their Strategic Plan and this may be something that Council would like to defer to the new City Manager when the position is filled. A boiler plate manual has been drafted by the Clerk which was compiled from the Strategic Plan Presentation that staff developed together between 2016 and 2017.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Haffner made a motion to direct Department Heads to complete their draft Strategic Plan by May 31, 2019. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes, (Brannon, Farris, Green, Haffner, McCormick); motion carried.*

**X. New Business**

**A. Resolution to support HB-191**

- Clerk Podraza presented the draft Resolution to support HB-191 titled ***Northwest Florida Rural Inland Affected Counties Recovery Fund.***

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon made a motion to approve the draft Resolution to support HB-191. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion.*

Council discussion ensued. The administration of the funding for this will be very similar to the Triumph Fund.

*Councilwoman Brannon withdrew her motion. Councilwoman Haffner withdrew her second.*

**B. Mayor Russ Barley**

- Mayor Barley requested Council discussion regarding the Triumph Meeting he will be attending the week of March 18<sup>th</sup>. The Triumph Board asked that information be brought back regarding businesses and jobs that may be coming to the City. Council and Staff concurred that at the current time, the City does not have anything coming down the pike that would pertain to what the Triumph Board is looking for.

**C. Councilwoman Haffner**

**1. Billing Payments**

- Councilwoman Haffner inquired if the Bill Pay system can be changed so that the customer can see their balance when they make a payment on-line. Can the system be set up to only accept payment for the full balance? Councilwoman Haffner also inquired if the administrative fee will show when customers pay on-line?
- Council discussion ensued and staff will contact the Bill Pay company and find out what

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).



**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

can be done.

- Staff can hand key the administrative fees so that they will be on the statement when customers pay on-line.

2. ~~Reclaim System Update~~

D. Councilwoman Green

1. ~~Department Standard Operating Procedures~~

2. Legislative Action Days

- Councilwoman Green informed the Council that she will be attending the Legislative Action Days on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

3. Chain of Command

- Councilwoman Green wanted to verify that the Billing Chain of Command has been given to the Billing Staff and to let Billing Manager Roberts know that she has Council support in holding up the chain of command that was approved.
- Councilwoman Green also wanted to advise that Staff should be mindful that if they work on large projects together, that it should be a directive from the Council.
- Councilwoman Brannon concurs with Councilwoman Green.

4. Bad Debt

- Councilwoman Green discussed the bad debt email that was sent to Council by Billing Manager Roberts regarding bad debt totals from 2005 through 2019. Councilwoman Green is most concerned with 2016 to 2019 bad debt.
- Councilwoman Green advised that the Bad debt in 2017 was approximately \$9,400.00 and in 2018 it was \$21,000.00. Currently so far this year it is \$7,600.00.
- Councilwoman Green is concerned with the bad debt that accumulated while Finance Officer Bowers was over the Billing Department.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Green made a motion to put a letter of reprimand in Finance Officer Sara Bowers employee file for the extreme bad debt that has accumulated under her direct. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion for discussion.*

Councilman McCormick would like to research the information more thoroughly before deciding. Council discussion ensued.

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).





**City of Freeport**  
**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
9:00 a.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
March 12, 2019 Minutes

*Councilwoman Green withdrew her motion; Councilwoman Brannon withdrew her motion.*

**XI. Public Comment: None**

**XII. Adjournment**

Mayor Barley adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL

---

Mayor

ATTEST

---

City Clerk

The City of Freeport may take action on any matter during this meeting, including items that are not set forth within this agenda.

In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 850-835-2822 by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting.

No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes).